

St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, Diocese of the West

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Website: www.st-mark-church.org

Archpriest Michael Laffoon, Priest Patrick Irish

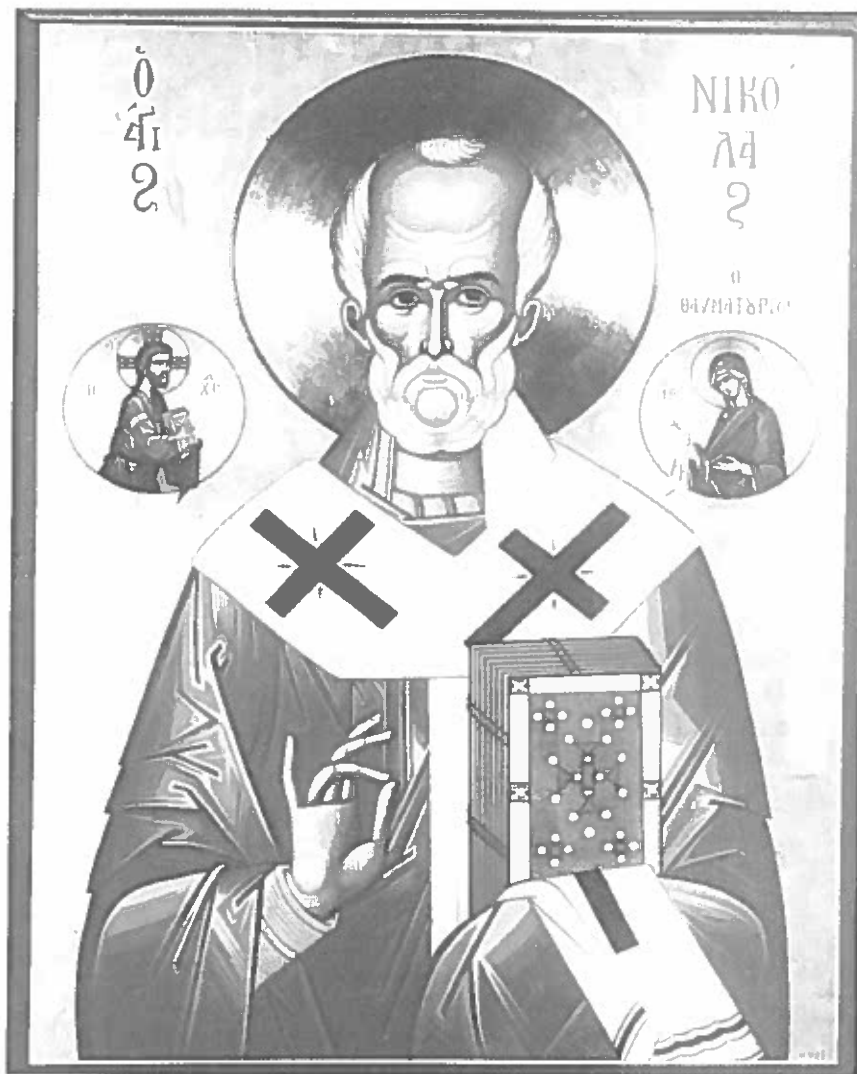
Protodeacon George Moubayed, Dn. Nicholas Mamey, Sub Deacon Athanasius Fakhouri

Choir Director Barbara Scholl

Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Mark Ellis, Theresa Joubran,

Karim Youssef

Teen Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri



DECEMBER 6, 2020

NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER, ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA IN LYCIA

NICHOLAS, BISHOP OF PATARA; NEW-MARTYR NICHOLAS OF KARAMANIA IN ASIA MINOR

Entrance Hymns

Troparion for the Resurrection in the First Tone: While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

Troparion of St. Nicholas in the Fourth Tone: Thy works of justice did reveal thee to thy community as a canon of faith, the likeness of humility and teacher of abstinence, O Father Bishop Nicholas. Wherefore, by humility thou hast achieved exaltation, and by thy meekness wealth. Intercede, therefore, with Christ God to save our souls.

All: Troparion to St. Mark in the Fourth Tone: From thy childhood the light of truth enlightened thee, O Mark, and thou didst love the labor of Christ the Savior. Wherefore thou didst follow Peter with zeal and didst serve Paul as a fellow laborer and didst enlighten the world with thy holy Gospel.

Kontakion of Preparation for the Nativity of Christ in the Third Tone: Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth in an ineffable manner to the pre-eternal Word. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest, and glorify with the angels and shepherds him who shall appear by his own will as a new Child, the pre-eternal God.

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Prokeimenon: (Psalm 115.15, 12) Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. What shall I render to the Lord for all that He has given me?

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (13:17-21)

Brethren, obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Alleluia Verses (Psalm:131.9,13) Your Priests O Lord, shall be clothed in righteousness, and your saints shall rejoice. For the Lord has chosen Zion.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (13:10-17)

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

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Holy oblations are given today by Robert Attyah and family for the soul of his mother Yvonne Attyah, departed this life one year (Memory Eternal) and by Nuha Qushair and family for her granddaughter Alexandra on the occasion of her 25th birthday, for the good health of her daughter Mae, and for the souls of her Uncle Nicola, and grandmother Barbara (Memory Eternal).

Until further notice, there is no Coffee Hour.

Please remember in your prayers: Eleanor Wackeen, Yuri Sidorenko, Jamal El-Sayegh, Tarek Fakhouri, Adele Bahbah, Adib and Nabila Zabaneh, and the suffering people of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Palestine, Venezuela, Ukraine, and all people afflicted by violence and disease, especially those affected by the Coronavirus.

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Good Samaritan Fund

Several years ago, St. Mark Church established a fund for assisting those in need, both within our parish and in the general community. From time to time we ask for contributions to the Good Samaritan Fund, and this is one of those times. If you are in need of assistance or you are aware of someone in our parish that needs financial assistance, please speak with Fr. Michael.

Today

Is the Fourth Sunday of the Christmas Fast (Advent). This fast, which lasts exactly 40 days, prepares us to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity (Birth) of Jesus Christ, commonly known as Christmas. During this season we are reminded that the Christian life style must include alms giving (acts of charity), prayer and fasting. Therefore, we are asked to intensify these efforts. During Advent we should be praying more, giving more time and resources to those in need, eat less and more simply, and above all, seek to fast from sin. As usual, Wednesdays and Fridays are strict fasting days (abstention from all meat, poultry, dairy & egg products, alcohol and olive oil). Until December 20, the other days of the week we are to fast from all meat and meat products, with wine and olive oil allowed. As part of our Advent effort Orthodox Christians should also participate in the Sacrament of Confession. The only way to combat the commercialization and vaguely sentimental observance of the Birth of the Savior is to prepare for a Holy Feast Day by participating in some meaningful way in the Fast.

2021 Wall Calendars are here. Please pick on up from the information table in the Hall.

Please remember that even in the midst of this difficult period, the expenses of the parish continue. It is important that we send in our donations and pledges via U.S. mail, or if you prefer to pay by credit card go to our new parish web page www.st-mark-church.org and click on "Donate" We are working to keep our expenditures as low as possible until things return to a more normal state.

Message forwarded from our Scrip Coordinator Saeda Turk:

Dear Charity Administrator,

This email is to notify you that St Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church (EIN: 33-0500812) has been issued a \$43.11 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile program activity between July 1 and September 30, 2020.

The donation was deposited to your organization's bank account on or before November 12, 2020. It may take several days for the donation to appear in the account.

Thank you,

Your AmazonSmile Team

This Week

Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Advent Parakelsis (Supplication Service)

Friday 6:00 p.m. Advent Parakelsis (Supplication Service)

Saturday Great Vespers 4:00 p.m.

Fasting is an exceptional virtue; it represses bodily impulses and gives strength to the soul to fight against the poisoning of the heart through the senses, and provides it with a remedy against any past poisoning. Fasting causes the mind to be cleansed constantly. It withers up every evil thought and brings healthy, godly thoughts -- -- holy thoughts that enlighten the mind and kindle it with more zeal and spiritual fervor.

Elder Ephraim of Philotheou Monastery, Mount Athos

Saint of the Day

Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra

This Saint lived during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, and reposed in 330. As a young man, he desired to espouse the solitary life. He made a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem, where he found a place to withdraw to devote himself to prayer. It was made known to him, however, that this was not the will of God for him, but that he should return to his homeland to be a cause of salvation for many. He returned to Myra, and was ordained bishop. He became known for his abundant mercy, providing for the poor and needy, and delivering those who had been unjustly accused. No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of the 318 Fathers at Nicaea in 325; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock ... was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is the patron of all travellers, and of sea-farers in particular; he is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.

Regarding Church Attendance

We have been enabling parish members to sign up for purposes of attending Sunday Divine Liturgy. There is a limited total number of attendees (60). To sign up, please go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904044CABAB29A4FF2-sunday>. Holy Services will continue being live-streamed at <https://livestream.com/accounts/13863088/events/9076624?t=1586211820473>

We are implementing this partial re-opening using the guidelines from the State of California and from our Metropolitan. These are summarized below. Please read these guidelines carefully and follow them. We will continue to live stream all services until we all can be together again. For those attending services, please work diligently to be at church on time. It is a gift to be able to come together again so let's start with "Blessed is the Kingdom" at 10 AM. You are also welcome to join us for Matins at 8:45 AM. All attendees must practice self-distancing, excepting those who live in the same household (no less than 6 ft. separation). Every other row of seats will be "blocked off" to facilitate distancing. Ushers may ask you to move if necessary to maintain prudent distancing. The wearing of protective masks is highly recommended (except young children). Choir members will not be wearing masks, but will practice distancing). *If you have symptoms of illness, please stay home. These symptoms include: Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Headache, New loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting, Diarrhea.* People with serious underlying conditions and the elderly should stay home. These people can schedule Confession and/or reception of Holy Communion by appointment. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should not participate in holy services for 14 days.

December 2020

November '20

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

January '21

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
		3	4	5	6	7
		8	9	10	11	12
		13	14	15	16	17
		18	19	20	21	22
		23	24	25	26	27
		28	29	30	31	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
			Advent Fast Advent Paraklesis 6:00 .m.		Feast of St. Barbara & St. John of Damascus	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
St. Nicholas Day	Pearl Harbor		Advent Fast Advent Paraklesis 6:00 .m.	Hanukkah begins	Advent Paraklesis 6:00 .m.	Vespers 4:00 p.m.
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
St. Herman of Alaska			Advent Fast Advent Paraklesis 6:00 .m.		Advent Paraklesis 6:00 .m.	Vespers 4:00 p.m.
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Panish Council 7:00 p.m. St. Ignatius Day		Advent Fast Advent Paraklesis 6:00 .m.	Royal Hours 9:30 a.m.	Advent Paraklesis 6:00 .m. Christmas Day	Vespers 4:00 p.m.
Pre-Feast Vespers 6:00 p.m.	Pre-Feast Vespers 6:00 p.m.	Pre-Feast Vespers 6:00 p.m.	Advent Fast Pre-Feast Vespers 6:00 p.m.	Vigil for Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ 8:00 p.m.	No Service	Vespers 4:00 p.m.
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
St. Stephen the Protomartyr			Vespers 6:00 p.m. No Fast	New Year's Eve		
3	4	Notes		Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m.	No Fast	

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Choir and Chanters Appreciation Sunday
The Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker
December 6, 2020

Beloved in Christ,

We greet you on this holy feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, as we honor our choir members and chanters.

This beloved saint, who is revered throughout the world, inspires the essence of what this holy season embodies, giving to the poor and serving as a model of humility and abstinence. St. Nicholas was not one of those great and learned theologians who left us volumes to read. Rather, he was one who through meekness and sacrificial love led by example. He defended the faith against Arianism, one of the ancient heresies that plagued the early Church. The words from his apolytikion (troparion), *“by humility you received exaltation and by your meekness wealth”* serve as a reminder of his way of life and as an example for all of us to emulate. That very apolytikion became a model hymn for all hierarchs. The great love and devotion of the faithful for St. Nicholas is expressed by the many churches dedicated to his patronage throughout the world. Within the Archdiocese, we first established the mother cathedral in Brooklyn, NY, and then soon after the cathedral in Los Angeles, CA, with a number of parishes dedicated to him in between. May he continue to intercede for us!

As Orthodox Christians, we are called upon to defend the truth of our faith at every possible opportunity. While our calling to do so today is unlike that of St. Nicholas many centuries ago, we all the same find occasions to do so in a variety of ways, one of which is through church hymnography. Sacred music is a means by which we can communicate Orthodox theology thereby helping the faithful to understand complicated dogma in palatable way.

It is with this in mind that we set aside the first Sunday of December every year to say “thank you” to our choirs and chanters. Together with our clergy, Sunday School teachers, youth workers and others, our choir members and chanters *teach* us the faith

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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through chanting the ancient hymns of our Church via various musical traditions that we have inherited from all over the world.

This year in particular, we are especially grateful to our choir members and chanters for their perseverance and faithfulness in the midst of the pandemic that has hovered over us since March. These months have indeed been unlike any others we have ever experienced. Instead of large beautiful choirs, we have been limited to a small handful of singers; and even just one or two people responding to the priest in the early months of the pandemic. As the summer came and things improved, we were able to return in some way or another to a limited sense of normalcy with regard to our choirs, depending on the local circumstances. Now, it seems once again, we may be called to endure more as cases increase-may God give us strength!

Nevertheless, God, in his mercy and infinite wisdom, has provided ways and means for us to not only get by, but has even inspired us with new ideas to teach our choirs during this time. Thanks be to God, through the direction of our capable chairlady of the Department of Sacred Music, Ms. Mareena Boosamra Ball, we have found ways to keep everyone involved and reach even more people. We had a very successful Sacred Music Institute last summer on "Zoom" that had a record of 357 registrants. Because of that great success they have continued offering weekly "Zoom" classes in Western Music Theory, Byzantine Chant and Voice Lessons taught by the department faculty. The department is also planning a virtual archdiocesan-wide Christmas concert this month on December 22nd at 8:00 PM on YouTube and many parishes are following their lead by doing similar things on the local level. May God continue to guide them as they navigate through these troubling times and encourage them to continue to inspire all of us! So once again let us say "thank you" and, more importantly let us pray for our choir members and chanters, especially those who have not been able to "sing to the Lord" during this time, with the fervent prayer that their collective voices may once again lift up our prayers to the heavens and fill our churches with songs of praise.

With paternal love and appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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